



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2019

by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/18/3210159

The Hub Sandwich and Coffee Bar, Elms Avenue, Ramsgate CT11 9BD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr P Castle against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref F/TH/18/0612, dated 27 April 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor extension over café to provide office together with external staircase and minor external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor extension over café to provide office together with external staircase and minor external alterations at The Hub Sandwich and Coffee Bar, Elms Avenue, Ramsgate CT11 9BD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref F/TH/18/0612, dated 27 April 2018, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 161-PLN-200 Rev A and 161-PLN-150.
 - 3) Prior to the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved, samples of the materials to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the corner of Elms Avenue and Queen Street and comprises a single-storey, modest building which is used as a café. The building is simple in design, and functional, and originally formed a public toilet block. It has rendered walls and a pitched roof and is sited on the back edge of the footpath and adjacent to a small car park.
4. The surrounding area is mixed in character and is predominantly commercial. Traditional buildings of three and four storeys run opposite along Queen Street

which mainly comprise of shops at ground floor. On the opposite side of Elms Avenue is Waitrose with a large car park. Adjacent to the appeal building is a tall, five storey office building, which is of a functional and utilitarian design and is prominent within the surroundings.

5. The proposed development would involve the extension of the existing building upwards with the addition of a first floor. The design would be contemporary and would also feature an external spiral staircase. The proposed use would be for an office above the café and would also provide a small terrace area for café seating.
6. The building, as a result of its design, scale and positioning, does appear as a stand-alone building within the street scene. However, it is sited in proximity to nearby buildings, which show considerable variety in scale and character. The appeal building is set within a group of trees which provides some screening and wider views of the appeal site are dominated by the larger surrounding buildings. As a result of its proximity to other buildings, including the large office building, I disagree with the Council's view that the building is isolated, despite its positioning forward of the predominant building line. I also find that as a result of the trees and surrounding buildings, the site is not in an area with an open character but relates more to the built-up context of the locality.
7. The proposed development would add a degree of bulk to a modest and simple building. However, the design of the development has sought to create a contrasting, contemporary and lightweight addition. The design and use of the contemporary materials would reduce the overall visual bulk of the development. Furthermore, the appeal building is seen predominantly against the backdrop of significantly larger buildings and I therefore find that the additional height, form and bulk would not be harmful to the host building or to the character and appearance of the area.
8. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not be visually intrusive and would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore comply with Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan (2006) which seeks to ensure that development is of a high standard of quality and design and respects and enhances the local character of an area, amongst other things. It would also comply with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Conditions

9. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition listing the approved plans as this provides certainty. A condition requiring details of the external materials is necessary in the interests of the visual character of the area.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

R Norman

INSPECTOR